

Touchstone

Surrey
Earth
Mysteries



No. 102

July 2013

A PURITON MOUND AND THE BRENT KNOLL TRIANGLE



Brent Knoll

The Iron Age hillfort of Brent Knoll rises spectacularly from the Somerset Levels and the villages of Brent Knoll and East Brent cling to its lower slopes. At 449 feet high the view over a large part of the county is spectacular, and the hill is visible for many miles around.

The Polden Hills to the south, Glaston-

bury Tor to the east, the Mendip Hills and Cheddar Gorge to the north east, the Bristol Channel and Wales to the west and the Quantock Hills to the south west are all visible from the summit. It has been inhabited since the Bronze Age, and its later Iron Age double ramparts were later used by the Romans. It was known by them as The Mount of Frogs (Mons Ranarum) and Roman coins of the Emperor Trajan (AD98 - 117) and Septimus Severus (AD145 - 211) have been found on the Knoll. It stands as an outcrop of the Mendip Hills.

It has Arthurian associations too, the legend being that, as the Mount of Frogs, it was guarded by three giants. One of Arthur's knights, Ider, son of Nuth, had to quest to the mount and slay all the giants single handed to prove his virtue as a knight. Unfortunately he perished in the attempt. Arthur, remorseful that he had sent the young knight to his death gave Brent Marsh to the Monks of Glastonbury, so that they could



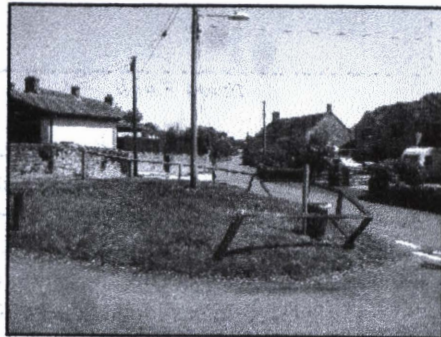
pray for Ider's soul. The hill is also one of the contenders for Mount Badon, the site of one of Arthur's battles against the Saxons, and there is a hamlet called Battleborough adjacent to it, though this may refer to a battle in AD875 when the Saxons drove away the Vikings. The land was given to Glastonbury Abbey by the Saxon King Ina and a statue of him is in a niche on the tower of East Brent Church.

There seem to be three leys forming a triangle at Brent Knoll, one of them going through the

ley centre at Puriton Church where my wife is the vicar. The centre is at the tower, the oldest part of the present building (13th century) though there was an earlier church mentioned in the Domesday Book, and there has been mention of a belief that there was a Roman building on the site, though I cannot find records of any evidence for this. It was an estuary port in Roman times though, when the River Parrett took a different course, against the edge of the Polden Ridge which goes from here to Street and carried a Roman road. It may have been the site of the lost Roman town of Uxella, mentioned in the Ravenna Cosmography. The town may have included the neighbouring village of Pawlett, as there was a Roman road coming south past Brent Knoll to this, while the ridge road went to Puriton. (see <http://www.ahsoc.fsnet.co.uk/uxella>).

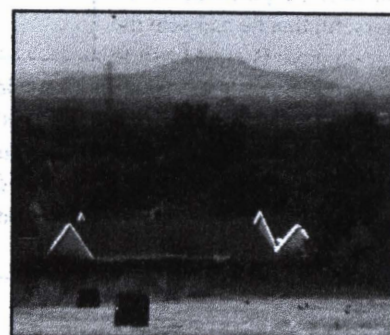
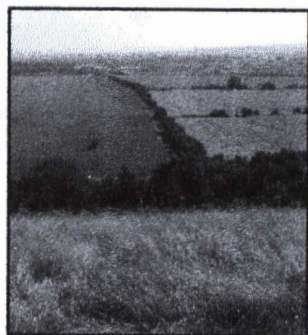


At least, I originally thought that the Brent Knoll ley went through the centre in the church tower, but when examining the map more closely I could see that the line (formed through the alignment of the other points) actually goes a little to the east of the church, forming a small triangle with the other two leys (which do go through the tower), a similar arrangement to that of the Negen Stones at Staines.



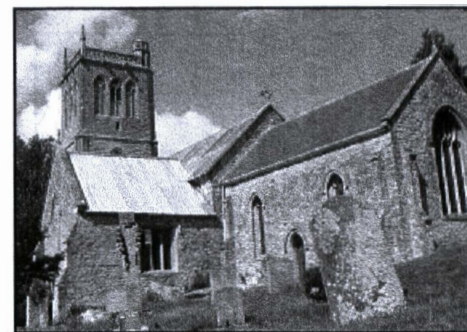
The raised green at the Batch Road junction

Coming across the Kings Sedgmoor Drain, the line goes over Puriton Hill, the site of the old port when the river ran against the hill, and where Roman buildings interpreted as warehouses were found when the approach road for the M25 was being built in the 1970s. From Puriton Hill, one can see the course of the drain, which is approximately where the river was, though that was very much wider. Also a field boundary which seems to follow the line of the ley, can



be seen stretching away in the direction of Bridgwater. From the other side of the hill, Brent Knoll can be seen in the distance.

The ley then goes through the main



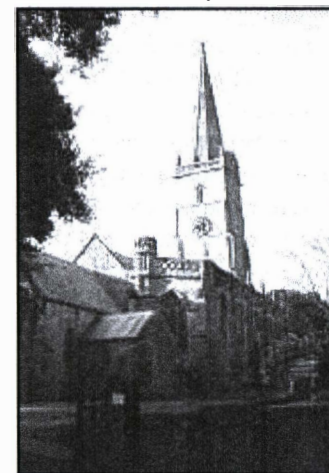
Brent Knoll Church

the churchyard, and is about 16 paces wide.

The line then runs along the first stretch of Batch Road, which then has a double bend; it then crosses the road beyond the bend at a slight angle, where there is a field gate on the left. Opposite, we get our first glimpse of Brent Knoll, the top of which is visible above the trees on the skyline.



Feature near Withy Grove Farm, near Huntspill River (contrast increased to show)



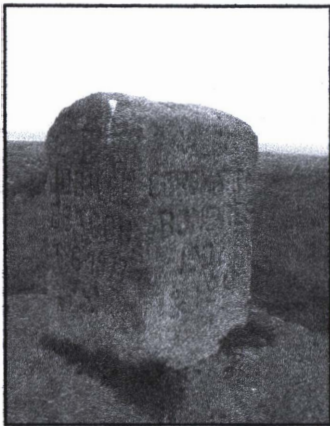
East Brent Church

roads near Mudgeley, Ebbor Gorge and two tumuli on the Mendips. This line is about 13 paces wide.

The Brent Knoll ley continues from Puriton to cross the levels by the Huntspills, and after crossing the Huntspill River (which is an artificial cut, not really a river) goes through Withy Grove Farm, coincident with its track. Here it crosses a ley going to St. John's Church, the Abbey and Chalice Well at Glastonbury, and there seems to be a possible small cropmark feature visible on the aerial picture on Google Earth. A little further on it goes through another farm, New Road Farm, where it crosses the west-running ley that runs along the nave of Wells Cathedral and goes on to

go through the important prehistoric site and Roman road junction of Beacon Hill, Shepton Mallet.

From here it goes to run along one of the ramparts of Brent Knoll, and then goes to East Brent Church (with the statue of King Ina) and a short piece of coincident track, going on to another Somerset viewpoint, Bleadon Hill. Although no ancient site is marked on the map here, in 1870-72, John Marius Wilson's *Imperial Gazetteer of England and Wales* mentions that "remains of an ancient British camp are on Bleadon Hill; and bones, coins, and armour have been found".



**The Coronation Stone,
Brent Knoll**

Then the ley goes on to Locking Castle, a motte and bailey site now part of a golf course. It was on Carberry Hill. Excavations in 1902 identified the remains of a small stone chamber surrounded by a ditch. Fragments of pottery and the remains of a sword were also found.

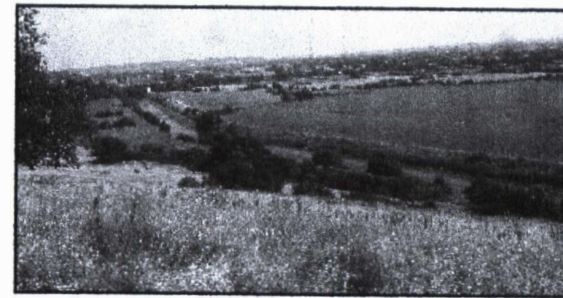


**Bronze figurine
found at Cadbury
Congresbury**

The second ley at Brent Knoll runs along a coincident stretch of road at Holwell Combe a crossroads at Four Forks and Charlynch church. It then crosses Pawlett Hams and comes to Brent Knoll Church and East Brent Church. Then it passes through a multijunction at Loxton and Banwell Church before going on to skirt the edge of Cadbury Hill fort near Congresbury (not to be confused with the one at

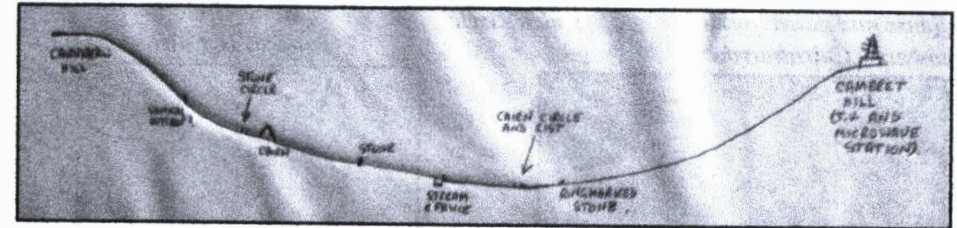
South Cadbury). The remains of Iron Age round houses may still be seen inside, and there was also evidence of rectangular buildings. The hill fort was refortified around 400 and imported pottery has been found. It could have been the monastery of Saint Congar after whom Congresbury was named. To the north of the hill in Henley Wood a Roman temple was built, which seems to have been on the ley. After it fell into ruin in the fifth century, local people who had presumably been converted to Christianity, were buried at the site over earlier pagan graves; this could be evidence that it was later the site of the monastery. Excavations on the site prior to its destruction for a land quarry revealed finds including a 20 mm bronze pre Roman figurine of a nude female with a plaited band and collar around her neck.

The third ley goes through Brent Knoll Church and then the coronation stone on the summit of the Knoll. Then it goes through Charterhouse Church on the Mendips and its adjacent Roman fort, and Compton Martin Church. These three leys form a triangle round the summit of Brent Knoll.



The site of the port at Puriton - the original stretch of the Parrett here would have been much wider than the Kings Sedgmoor Drain running there today - seagoing ships could have docked "in the lee of the Poldens".

A VISIBLE LEY IN SCOTLAND



Recently I came across some photographs I had taken in 1982 when on a field trip in Scotland with Philip Heselton and the Northern Earth Mysteries Group. They were of an apparently visible ley between two hills in Dumfries and Galloway - Cambret Hill and Cairharrow Hill - and it shows an interesting mixture of prehistoric sites. Five, or possibly six sites can be seen in alignment when on the slopes of Cambret Hill. This has a TV and microwave station which now broadcasts Freeview programmes. Coming down the hill one comes to a ringmarked stone, with a pattern of the type which always reminded me of a sperm cell penetrating an egg. Then there is a cairn circle and cist. Crossing the stream at the bottom of the valley, there is then a standing stone, and higher up a cairn and a stone circle. Beyond this there is a conical feature which may be an outcrop, and finally the summit cairn and trig point on Cairnharrow. Continuing further southward, the alignment goes through another cairn north of Laggan, and a burial chamber north of Mossyard. This is Newton Farm burial chamber, which is rectangular with four pillars about 1.5m high arranged one at each corner like a four-poster bed. The line then leaves the coast at Mossyard Bay.



Cairn on Cairnharrow



Cairn below Cairnharrow



Stone and cairn looking towards Cairnharrow



Cairn circle



Stone circle looking towards Cairnharrow



Ringmarked stone



Newton Farm Burial Chamber

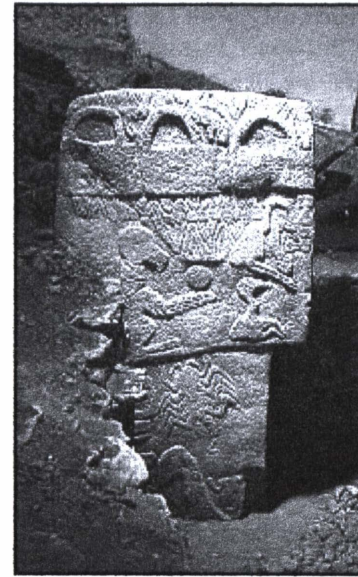
Oldest stone circles and alignment to Jerusalem

Urfa is in southeastern Anatolia, Turkey, about thirty miles north of the Syrian border. Tens of thousands of people come here every year to visit a cave where Abraham may have been born, called Ur of the Chaldeans in the Bible. Urfa also has a Greek name, Edessa, under which it is enshrined in the Eastern Orthodox Church as the origin of perhaps the world's first icon: a handkerchief on which Jesus wiped his face, preserving his image. (Known as the Image of Edessa, the holy handkerchief was said to be a gift from Christ to King Abgar V, who was suffering from leprosy.)

Nearby is a site that predates Abraham and monotheism by some eight millennia: a vast complex of Stonehenge-style megalithic circles in the Urfa countryside. For thousands of years, this Early Neolithic structure lay buried under multiple strata of prehistoric earth, and there-



The mulberry tree on the summit has strips of cloth tied to the branches



fore just looked like a big hill. Its Turkish name is Göbekli Tepe: "hill with a potbelly," or "fat hill."

It's estimated to be eleven thousand years old—six and a half thousand years older than the Great Pyramid, five and a half thousand years older than the earliest known cuneiform texts, and about a thousand years older than the walls of Jericho, formerly believed to be the world's most ancient monumental structure. The site comprises more than sixty multi-ton T-shaped limestone pillars, most of them engraved with bas-reliefs of dangerous animals: not the docile, edible bison and deer featured in Paleolithic cave paintings but ominous configurations of lions, foxes, boars, vultures, scorpions, spiders, and snakes. The site has yielded no traces of habitation—no rubbish pits, no water source, no houses, no hearths, no roofs, no domestic plant or animal remains—and is therefore

believed to have been built by hunter-gatherers, who used it as a religious sanctuary. Comparisons of iconography from similar sites indicate that different groups congregated there from up to sixty miles away. Mysteriously, the pillars appear to have been buried, deliberately and all at once, around 8200 B.C., some thirteen hundred years after their construction.

One face of the hill has been almost completely excavated, exposing four stone circles, each made up of a dozen or so pillars with two larger pillars in the middle. Several of these megaliths had surprisingly poor foundations, and were now standing thanks only to wooden supports. Archeologists speculate that the weak foundations may have had some acoustic purpose: perhaps the pillars were meant to hum in the wind. During their centuries of use, the pillars were periodically buried, with new pillars built on top of or alongside the old ones. The circles thus stand at different depths in the hill. The pillars are almost certainly humanoid figures, with long narrow bodies and large oblong heads. There are pillars depicted with clasped hands, or wearing foxtail loincloths. One is wearing a necklace with a bucranium, or bull's head.

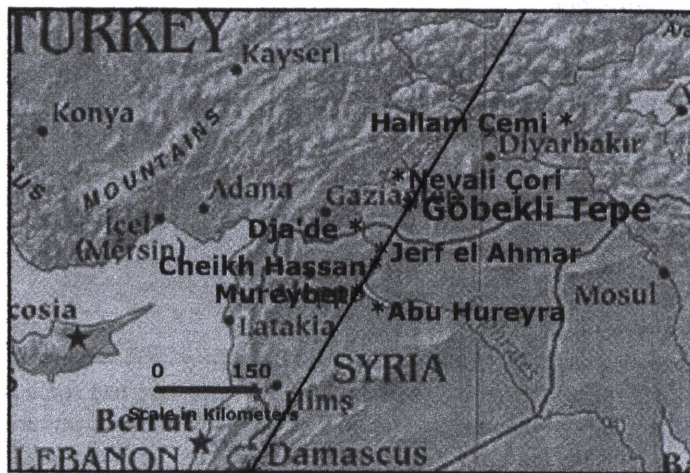




Because the bas-reliefs of Göbekli Tepe, unlike the cave paintings of the Upper Paleolithic, offer no picture of daily life—no hunting scenes, and very few of the aurochs, gazelles, and deer that made up most of the hunter-gatherer diet—they are believed to be symbols, a message we don't know how to read. The animals might be mythical characters, symbolic scapegoats, tribal families, mnemonic devices, or perhaps totemic scarecrows, guarding the pillars from evil. They include a scorpion the size of a small suitcase, and a jackal-like creature with an exposed rib cage. On one pillar, a row of lumpy, eyeless “ducks” float above an extremely convincing boar, with an erect penis. Another relief consists of the simple contour of a fox, like a chalk outline at a murder scene, also with a distinct penis. So far, all the mammals represented at Göbekli Tepe are visibly male, with the exception of one fox, which, in place of a penis, has several snakes coming out of its abdomen. Perhaps the most debated composition portrays a vulture carrying a round object on one wing; below its feet, a

headless male torso displays yet another erect penis.

The first survey of Göbekli Tepe was begun in 1963, by Peter Benedict, an archeologist from the University of Chicago, who described the site as “a complex of round-topped knolls of red earth,” two of which were surmounted by “small cemeteries,” probably dating from the Byzantine Empire. The ruins remained sleeping under the earth until the arrival of someone who could recognize them. In 1994, Klaus



The apparent alignment of Göbekli Tepe, Jerf el Ahmar, Cheikh Hassan, Mureybet, Damascus and Jerusalem (see upper map)

Schmidt, an archeologist at Heidelberg University, visited the site and immediately understood that Benedict's report had been wrong. He saw that the “knolls” were man-made mounds, and that the flint shards crunching underfoot had been shaped by Neolithic hands. Schmidt had spent much of the previous decade working at Nevali Çori, a nearby settlement from the ninth millennium B.C., which included both domestic habitations and a “sanctuary” with T-shaped pillars.

Some researchers theorize that the events of a cataclysmic flood and a story similar to that told of Noah's ark was recorded on the stone pillars of Göbekli Tepe. If true, that would push the date of the great flood back to the end of the last ice age, far earlier than the biblical period. Mount Ararat, the biblical site of the landing of the ark, is less than 350 miles away. There are some incredible things about this mystical place but we still do not know the answers to some of the most important questions like, who built Göbekli Tepe? to what purpose? and how was Göbekli Tepe preserved until today? Researchers point that Göbekli Tepe was “carefully” placed underneath the sand, the whole site was actually buried. Why would the builders bury such an incredible site? To protect it? to preserve it?

At present, Göbekli Tepe raises more questions for archaeology and prehistory than it answers. We do not know how a force large enough to construct, augment, and maintain such a substantial complex was mobilized and rewarded or fed in the conditions of pre-sedentary society. We cannot “read” the pictograms, and do not know for certain what meaning the animal reliefs had for visitors to the site; the variety of fauna depicted, from lions and boars to birds and insects, makes any single explanation problematic.

Two maps on the web seem to indicate that this site aligns with Damascus and Jerusalem, and between it and Damascus are three other Neolithic sites. One is Jerf el Ahmar, a Prepottery Neolithic site located on the Euphrates River of north central Syria. The site is located within 40 km of a number of PPN sites including Mureybet, Dja'de and Göbekli Tepe. It is remarkable for a number of grinding stones called querns, which were used to grind wild barley several centuries before its domestication. It was occupied between 11500-10500 BC. The site contains the remains of 10 separate villages overlaying one another on the top of two hills. Jerf el Ahmar was discovered in 1989 and excavated in the 1990s by a French-Syrian team led by Danielle Storeur and George Willcox.

Two other similar sites which seem to be on the alignment are Cheikh Hassan and Mureybet. Mureybet is a tell, or ancient settlement mound, located on the west bank of the Euphrates in Ar-Raqqah Governorate, northern Syria. The site was excavated between 1964 and 1974 and has since disappeared under the rising waters of Lake Assad. Mureybet was occupied

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between 10,200 and 8,000 BC.

The imposing stratigraphy of Göbekli Tepe attests to many centuries of activity, beginning at least as early as the epipaleolithic, or Pre-Pottery Neolithic A, in the 10th millennium BC. The PPNB buildings have been dated to c. the close of the 10th millennium BC. There are remains of smaller houses from the PPNB era and a few epipaleolithic finds as well. It is six thousand years earlier than Stonehenge.

http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2011/12/19/111219fa_fact_batuman

<http://archaeology.about.com/b/2012/03/14/jerf-el-ahmar.htm>

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ftk_fk4-1Q

BOOK REVIEWS

The Old Straight Tracks of Wessex, by Paul Devereux and Laurence Main, published by Thornhill Press, £4.95 (sold for £2.50), ISBN 0946328 41 2, 1992

When I saw this book in a bookshop in Wells, I thought it was something new, subsequent to Laurence's recent Moot in Wells. However, when reading the historical introduction, which I would judge was written by Paul (as it was very similar to other histories written by him) it became clear that it could not be - his enthusiasm for the subject, which came out clearly in the writing, is known to be a thing of the past, as he subsequently rejected the idea of leys. So this book, which is a series of guided walks on a number of classic leys, is very significant in and about the history of leys. As well as this, the leys discussed, at Avebury, the Stonehenge Cursus, Old Sarum, Maiden Castle and Glastbury, could well fire new enthusiasms in the subject, and on the way they introduce many associated concepts and facts, including the strange one that folklore seems to be silent about cursuses, as opposed to other sites, even those of similar age. I had never realised this.

Alfred Watkins' Herefordshire, in his own words and photographs, by Ron and Jennifer Shoesmith and Alfred Watkins, published by Logastron Press, £12.95, ISBN 978 1906663 67 4, 2012

This new book about the discoverer of the ley system and his love of his native county is a fascinating insight into his life. In the biographical introduction we learn of his many other achievements, particularly in photography, in which he was a pioneer and inventor of the first practical exposure meter. He was also an expert on beekeeping and he combined this with photography in a spectacular way by giving outdoor talks and demonstrations of it with a van in which the back was a screen. He would show pictures of the bees, their life cycle and the procedures for managing them, using a back projector. There was also a chapter on his work on leys, of course, and it was particularly interesting to see examples of his original enquiries, with his pictures. The second part of the book was an unpublished manuscript of his called *The Masefield Country*, and this, with the third section, a gallery of his pictures around the county, gives a personal insight into the life of the people of Herefordshire in the early twentieth century. After reading this book, we almost feel we have known him.

LETTERS

from Cheryl Traffon, St. Just, Cornwall:

I would just like to comment on Bob Shave's letter in Touchstone 97 about the so-called "crossing of two major leys (the E-line and the straight St. Michael Line) at South Crofty mine near Camborne in Cornwall". Bob's idea is an interesting one, but in the interests of accuracy I should point out that the two lines do not cross at South Crofty. I can't really comment much on the E-line, as it is not one that any of the three Dowsing Groups in Cornwall (West Cornwall Dowsters, Trencrom Dowsters and Tamar Valley Dowsters) have focussed on in any way, but I can confirm from the maps that I have of the Michael and Mary lines in Cornwall that the straight St. Michael line runs some distance south-east of South Crofty mine. It does, however, go through Gwennap Pit, to the east of Redruth (SW71724176) which was possibly originally an open-cast mining site and later became famous as the 'Preaching Pit' of the 19th Century Methodist preacher John Wesley, who preached there on no less than 17 occasions to large crowds of people.

from Bob Shave, East Grinstead, Sussex

Regarding the location of the St Michael Line in Cornwall, using computer software I get the following bearings for the St Michael Line measured from Ogbourne St George church, Wiltshire.

Ogbourne St George to Glastonbury Tor: 242 degrees 20 minutes

Ogbourne St George to Burrow Mump: 242 degrees 20 minutes

Ogbourne St George to South Crofty: 242 degrees 20 minutes

(All the above on the same line)

Ogbourne St George to Gwennap Pit: 241 degrees 57 minutes (South of the line)

Either I am doing something wrong, or Cheryl is, or both. Perhaps we should regard the St Michael Line as a corridor rather than a line?

from Norman Darwen, Lostock, Lancashire:

Regarding the venerated oak you mention in Touchstone #101. A couple of years ago I was walking on the West Pennine Moors above Bolton in Lancashire when I noticed a strange looking tree growing in the isolated ruins of a farmstead (of which there are many in this area). On getting nearer, I could see that it was a small-ish Silver Birch covered with white rags. I did look around for a well but could find nothing to give it any significance, and have been unable to find any further information about it. I did visit the tree again in early July, and the tree is still more or less the same, though some of the rags have now dropped off.

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THE HIDDEN UNITY and BEGINNINGS

The Hidden Unity looks at the strange phenomenon of subconscious siting of ley points, and notes that places of worship, of all religions and all ages, tend to predominate on leys. The environmental and philosophical implications of this are discussed, and the apparent necessity of worship but irrelevance of doctrine. Two ley centres are given as examples, and investigated in depth - the Shah Jehan Mosque in Woking and the Guru Nanak Sikh Temple, Scunthorpe. There is an appendix by Eileen Grimshaw on the significance of the Pagan religion to this study. Illustrated with photographs, maps and line drawings. **£2 plus 30p p&p from the Touchstone address. Please make cheques payable to J. Goddard.**

Beginnings is about a series of potentially useful discoveries, mainly made by Jimmy Goddard over a period of about twenty years, but having some overlap with discoveries made by others. For various reasons, the investigations are all in their early stages, and some have not been continued. They include earth energy detection, natural antigravity, subconscious siting, ley width, and the solar transition effect. There is also a chapter on cognitive dissonance - a psychological factor which seems to have been at the root of all bigotry - scientific, religious and other - down the ages. The booklet is concluded with an account of the discovery of leys by Alfred Watkins. **£2 plus 30p p&p from the Touchstone address. Please make cheques payable to J. Goddard.**

EARTH PEOPLE, SPACE PEOPLE

In 1961, Tony Wedd produced a manuscript *Earth Men, Space Men*, detailing many claims of extraterrestrial contact. It was never published, and I had thought it was lost, though it has recently been located - Tony had given it to Timothy Good. To try to make up for the loss in a much more modest size, this booklet was prepared. As well as giving details of some of the more prominent contact claims, there are articles on the history of the STAR Fellowship and some of its personalities, evidence for life in the Solar System and investigation into extraterrestrial language.

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THE LEGACY OF TONY WEDD

This CD-ROM is an electronic form of the travelling exhibition Tony planned, using his voice, writing, photographs and drawings to illustrate his research and findings in the fields of flying saucers, landscape energies and lost technology.

£12 from the Touchstone address. Please make cheques payable to J. Goddard.

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